

# 아동문학도서에 나타난 주인공의 민족적 특성에 관한 연구\*

## East Asian American Character's Characteristics in Children's Fictional Literature

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### 초 록

우리나라는 좁은 국토와 과밀인구 문제를 해결하고 세계로 뻗어가려는 정책적인 배려로 많은 국민들이 해외로 이민을 가고 있다. 특히 미국은 가장 많은 해외교포들이 살고 있는 곳으로 한국인 2세, 3세 등 교포 1세의 자녀들이 하루가 다르게 늘어가고 있으므로 그들에게 한국인으로서의 의식의 뿌리를 심어주기 위한 교육적 배려가 필요한 때라고 생각한다. 아동문학도서는 한국인으로서의 혈통을 갖고 태어났지만 한국의 역사와 문화, 가치관을 제대로 교육받기 어려운 환경속에서 성장하는 교포 후세들에게 어떠한 가르침보다도 훨씬 강력하고 효과적으로 한국인으로서의 문화의식과 전통, 역사에 대한 깨우침을 줄 수 있는 도구가 될 것이다. 또 그러한 문학도서는 미국을 형성하고 있는 다른 민족의 어린이들도 읽을 수 있는 것으로서 그들에게 한국의 문화와 역사를 알려줄 수 있는 매개체가 되어 한국과 한국인을 이해시킬 수 있는 자료가 된다. 본 논문은 이러한 문제의식에서 출발한 것으로 영어로 된 아동문학도서 속에 나타난 동아시아계 주인공들의 일반적 특성을 조사하는데 그 일차적인 목적이 있고 또한 같은 동아시아 문화권에 속해 있는 중국과 일본, 한국계 미국인들이 아동문학 도서 속에서 어떻게 다르게 묘사되고 있으며 그들의 문화와 역사, 전통을 이국에서 어떻게 지키면서 미국에 동화되어 가는지를 비교해 보는데 이차적인 목적이 있다.

### ABSTRACT

Multicultural literature serves as a device for mutual understanding of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. This sort of literature is like a window through which a reader can see what other value systems are. It also helps minority children discover their own cultural past and develop a sense of belonging. The purpose of this study is to investigate the general characteristics of East Asian American characters in English language children's fiction and to highlight the differences among three groups: Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans.

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## 1. Background and problems

In recent years, professional associations and libraries in the United States have actively played a social role in providing service to a culturally diverse population. Such service usually includes selection of multicultural literature for children and young adults.<sup>1)</sup>

Multicultural literature serves as a device for mutual understanding of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. This sort of literature is like a window through which a reader can see what other value systems are. Children can thus understand that although there are different cultures, all people have similar feelings and emotions. It also helps minority children discover their own cultural past and develop a sense of belonging.

When a child selects a book to read, two important factors can influence his selection: 1) his reading ability or interest; and 2) physical and content elements of the book such as illustrations, size of type,

readability of sentences, character, theme, and subject matter. Children especially seem to have a very personal relationship with literary characters. In their identification with the protagonist of a story, children are often acutely aware of the motives, ideas, and actions of that character.<sup>2)</sup>

A recent report shows that the Asian population is rapidly increasing in the United States. Asians account for nearly a third of the immigrants since 1965, especially Chinese and Korean families.<sup>3)</sup>

The purpose of this study is to investigate the general characteristics of East Asian American characters in English language children's fiction and to highlight the differences among three groups: Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans. There were a few studies on Chinese and Japanese Americans in children's fiction, but none has been conducted for Koreans. This study will help to fill the gap.

When selecting books, the librarian should read them thoroughly to determine whether they fit the needs of

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1) Shelley Quezada. (1992). Mainstreaming library services to multicultural populations : The evolving tapestry. *Wilson Library Bulletin*, February, P.28

2) Kay E. Vandergrift.(1980). Child and story : The literary connection. New York : Neal-Schuman, 109-110

3) Kathy Howard Latrobe and Mildred Knight Laughlin.(1992). Multicultural aspects of library media. Englewood : Libraries Unlimited, 7-8.

the population or the ethnic group's nature. Careful selection of appropriate materials can help to create an atmosphere in which all children can respect one another. Thus understanding of a variety of ethnic groups and their cultures through this study will help librarian's book selection.

## 2. Methodology

### 2. 1 Sample Selection

A total of 37 English language children's fiction titles with either Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, or Korean Americans as their major or minor characters were selected in this study. They were published between 1958 and 1993 for pre-school to seventh-grade reading levels (Appendix 1). Of all the East Asian American characters: nineteen were Chinese; fourteen were Japanese; and four were Korean.

Three bibliographies were consulted in selection: (1) Subject Guide to Children's Books in Print,<sup>4)</sup> 1982,

1989-90, 1990-91, 1994. The original idea was that compared pre-1980 titles with post-1980 titles, but not enough examples about East Asian American, so changed to post-1980 only. The titles appeared repeatedly in the bibliographies of those years. (2) An Annotated Bibliography: Recent Realistic Fiction and Informational Books for Young Children Portraying Asian-American and Native American Cultures.<sup>5)</sup> (3) Venture into Cultures: A Resource Book of Multicultural Materials and Programs.<sup>6)</sup> The following subject headings were used in the Subject Guide to Children's Books in Print: (1) Chinese in San Francisco - Fiction (2) Chinese in the US - Fiction (3) Japanese in the US - Fiction (4) Koreans in the US - Fiction.

### 2. 2 Categorization of Character's Characteristics

Based on personal qualities, family background and the interaction with society, each East Asian American character is characterized into: (1)

4) Subject Guide to Children's Books in Print. (1982, 1989, 1990, 1994). New York : R. R. Bowker.

5) Frances A. Dowd. (1994). An annotated bibliography : Recent realistic fiction and informational books for young children portraying Asian-American and Native American cultures, *MultiCultural Review*,1(2), 36-37.

6) Carla D. Hayden, ed.(1992). Venture into cultures: A resource book of multicultural materials and programs. Chicago : American Library Association. 37-56.

character's profile; (2) character's family life; and (3) influential character.

2. 2. 1 Character's profile

The characters are analyzed in terms of their age; sex; educational level; English ability; occupation; role in the story; personality; social accepting the dominant culture; and social acceptance in one's own ethnic culture. Profile factors are categorized under three main groups: physical traits; status position; and personality traits.

1) Physical traits

This category divides the characters by age and sex.

- Age: Children (1-12 years old)
- Teenager (13-19 years old)
- Adult (20-59 years old) or Parent, Teacher...
- Senior (60- years old) or Grandparent...

Sex: Male or Female.

2) Status position

The status position includes educational level, English ability, occupation, and their role in the story.

Educational level : Kindergarten, Primary school, Se-

condary school, Higher education, Illiterate

English ability :

- Good - Fluent English
- Fair - Enough only for some simple daily use
- Poor - Know only some English words and some short phrases
- None

Occupation : Divided into 5 large groups such as student, professional work (artist, churchman, medicine man, scientist, teacher..), craft (rug-weaver, seamstress, housewife.. ), service (restaurant, store, businessman...), physical labor (railroad worker, sweeper, teamster...).

Role in the story : Major or Minor

Major - Reflects author's values and play an important role in the story.

3) Personality traits<sup>7)</sup>

While physical traits and status positions are "objective" information, personality traits highlight "subjective" qualities such

as personality and perception of the dominant and ethnic culture.

Personality: A total of seventeen attributes are classified.

- Hostile
- Lazy/Irresponsible
- Selfish
- Dependable
- Unintelligent
- Negative
- Ostentatious
- Self-sacrificing
- Positive
- Ambitious
- Intelligent
- Energetic
- Unselfish
- Diligent
- Undependable
- Affable/Warm
- Eccentric

Social accepting the dominant culture: Active, Moderate, Passive

Social acceptance in one's own ethnic culture: Active, Moderate, Passive

### 2. 2. 2 Character's family life

Family life centers on family members' expectation and family values. It is examined under three main categories: family background, status position and family values.

#### 1) Family background

Family background covers parental presence, brothers and sisters, and dwelling.

Parental presence: Parents, Single parent, None

Brothers and sisters: Divided with three groups according to the number of brothers and sisters: None, One or two, More than two

Dwelling: Big city, Suburb, or Rural area

#### 2) Status position

Status position examines the economic well-being of the family. It includes parents' occupation, economic status, and social status.

Father's occupation: See previous list of occupations

7) Ideas for this section of the study were drawn from several sources including two doctoral dissertations. David K. Gast. (1965). Characteristics and concept of minority Americans in contemporary children's fictional literature. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Arizona State University.  
R. J. Grover.(1976). The relationship of readability, content, illustrations, and other format elements to the library book preferences of second grade children. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University

Mother's occupation: As in father's occupation.

Economic status<sup>8)</sup>: Poor - Hand-to-mouth or meager existence

Adequate - Having just a sufficiency to meet the everyday needs of life

Comfortable - More than an economic sufficiency to meet the every day needs of life

Wealthy - Opulent living standards

Social status: Based on educational level and economic status, it is divided into 3 classes.

Lower-class, Middle-class, and Upper-class.

### 3) Family values

Family values refer to such value systems as parents' attitude towards education and the goals of the whole family in life.

Parents' attitude about education: According to parents' expectation, there are three levels.

High, Middle, and Low.

Goals: There is a hierarchy of goals, starting from basic needs such as stability, through self-consciousness, economic advancement, up to social advance

Social advancement - To be accepted in the dominant society. The family tries to raise their social status through better education.

Economic advancement - More than sufficient in economic needs

Self-consciousness - Try to recognize themselves in terms of their own culture and other values.

Security, stability - Maintaining basic existence takes precedence of others in life.

### 2. 2. 3 Influential character

Influential character means that a person who is closely related with a major character and affects him. This

8) David K. Gast. op. cit., 53

category examines such factors as physical traits and status position of the influential character.

1) Physical traits

Age: Divided into four groups as in the unit character's profile

Sex: Male or Female.

2) Status position

Relation: Divided into seven groups: Friend; Parent; Grandparent; Brother or sister; Relatives;

Neighbor or family's friend; and Teacher.

2. 3 Procedure

Using the analytic instrument devised in Chapter 2.2, the investigator and two research aids read through all 37 books in the sample. The two research aids who participated in the study were Wayne State University doctoral students majoring in Communications. Both hold Master's degrees in English Literature.

The criteria for book selection were that (1) a main character was living in the United States, (2) immigrant

family, and (3) story takes place in the United States.

3. Findings

Thirty seven books were analyzed for the purpose of this study, and a book considered to have only one East Asian American major character. When an East Asian American was described as a minor character, it considered as if a major.

The findings of the analysis of the characteristics of each ethnic group are discussed bellow:

3. 1 Character's profile

The character profile of all East Asian Americans in the study is summarized in <Table 1>.

**Physical traits**

As shown in <Table 1>, the main characters in all of the books analyzed were children or teenagers. Of the 37 major characters, 28 were children (75.7%), while 9 were teenagers (24.3%). This was commensurate with the age of the

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9) A. Gessel; L. I. Francis; B. A. Louise.(1946). The child from five to ten. New York: Harper & Brothers. 440.

children for which the books were written. According to a research conducted by Gesell et al.,<sup>9)</sup> children like to read a story that features a character the same age as the reader.

With respect to gender, 28 books (75.7%) had girls as the main character while 9 (24.3%) had boys. Books on Japanese Americans emphasized female characters far more than male, with a ratio of 13 to one.

#### **Status position**

Of the total 37 children and teenagers analyzed, the educational levels of 31 were apparent. The majority (59.5%) of them attended primary level school and 21.6% attended secondary school.

Language was an important means to socialize. As seen in <Table 1>, 36.8% of the Chinese and 25% of the Koreans had problems with English. But 78.6% of the Japanese mastered English quite well. The reason the Japanese had significantly stronger language skills is clearly tied to the fact that almost all of those children were American born.

In this study, the characters were categorized according to their major occupations. Children who had not

entered school were labeled as pre-school groups while those in primary or secondary school were labeled as students. Of the total 37 children or teenagers analyzed, 29 (78.4%) were described as full time students. Of the total 19 Chinese children and teenagers, there were 2 pre-school, 13 students, 3 workers, and 1 unemployed. The Japanese had one farmer, 12 students and one pre-school character in stories. Each of the stories which has a non-student characters takes place several decades ago, when education was not a popular social norm for the immigrants. All four books on Korean Americans, who began to immigrate to America comparatively later than the Chinese or Japanese, have students as main characters.

Thirty two characters played a major role (86.5%) and five the minor role in the sample. Chinese Americans had far more important roles to play in the fictions. 18 were major, while only one had a non-Chinese American. Japanese and Korean, however, received less coverage with 11 (78.6%) majors and 3 minors for Japanese, and 3 majors (75%) and 1 minor for the Koreans.



<Table 1>

Character's Profile			Chinese American	Japanese American	Korean American	Row Total	
Physical Traits	Age	Children	13 (68.4)	12 (85.7)	3 (75.0)	28(75.7)	
		Teenager	6 (31.6)	2 (14.3)	1 (25.0)	9(24.3)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
	Sex	Male	7(36.8)	1(7.1)	1(25.0)	9(24.3)	
		Female	12(63.2)	13(92.9)	3(75.0)	28(75.7)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
Status Position	Educational Level	Kindergarten		1(7.1)		1(2.7)	
		Primary Sch.	11(57.9)	8(57.1)	3(75.0)	22(59.5)	
		Secondary Sch.	4(21.1)	3(21.4)	1(25.0)	8(21.6)	
		Not Stated	4(21.1)	2(14.3)		6(16.2)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
	English Ability	Well	6(31.6)	11(78.6)	3(75.0)	20(54.1)	
		Fair	2(10.5)			2(5.4)	
		Less	5(26.3)	1(7.1)	1(25.0)	7(18.9)	
		Not Stated	6(31.6)	2(14.3)		8(21.6)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
	Occupation	Pre-School	2(10.5)	1(7.1)		3(8.1)	
		Student	13(68.4)	12(85.7)	4(100.0)	29(78.4)	
		Farmer		1(7.1)		1(2.7)	
		Worker	3(15.8)			3(8.1)	
		Unemployed	1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
	Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)		
	Role in the Story	Major	18(94.7)	11(78.6)	3(75.0)	32(86.5)	
		Minor	1(5.3)	3(21.4)	1(25.0)	5(13.5)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
	Personality Traits	Personality	Dependable	2(10.5)			2(5.4)
			Negative	2(10.5)			2(5.4)
Positive			4(21.1)	4(28.6)	1(25.0)	9(24.3)	
Ambitious			1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
Intelligent			2(10.5)	1(7.1)		3(8.1)	
Energetic			5(26.3)	3(21.4)	1(25.0)	9(24.3)	
Unselfish				1(7.1)	1(25.0)	2(5.4)	
Diligent			1(5.3)	1(7.1)		2(5.4)	
Affable			1(5.3)	4(28.6)	1(25.0)	6(16.2)	
Eccentric			1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
Column Total		19	14	4	37(100.0)		
Social Acceptance in the Dominant Culture		Active	8(42.1)	7(50.0)	2(50.0)	17(45.9)	
		Moderate	2(10.5)	3(21.4)	2(50.0)	7(18.9)	
		Passive	6(31.6)	1(7.1)		7(18.9)	
		Not Stated	3(15.8)	3(21.4)		6(16.2)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
Social Acceptance in One's own Ethnic Culture		Active	8(42.1)	1(7.1)	2(50.0)	11(29.7)	
		Moderate	6(31.6)	7(50.0)	1(25.0)	14(37.8)	
		Passive	3(15.8)	3(21.4)	1(25.0)	7(18.9)	
		Not Stated	2(10.5)	3(21.4)		5(13.5)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	

### Personality traits.

Each character was analyzed in terms of their personality. Only one trait was discerned for each character. A total of 9 traits was found in Chinese, 6 traits in Japanese, and 4 traits in Korean as displayed in <Table 1>. Chinese were often described as energetic and positive, while Japanese as positive, affable, and energetic. The 4 personality characteristics on Korean American were positive, energetic, affable, and unselfish. The most popular personality traits in each of the racial groups were strikingly similar. The characteristics of energetic, positive were the most popular ones. Japanese had, however, a more affable character than that of the other racial groups. There were two negative personality traits in Chinese: negative, and eccentric.

Though Chinese, Japanese, and Korean belong to the same Oriental culture, they have their own characteristics. It is reflected by their acceptance of foreign culture. In the study, there were 8 (42.1%) Chinese actively merged themselves into dominant culture, while six (31.6%) showed a passive attitude. Fifty percent of Japanese and Korean characters were described as active

to accept dominant culture. Thus the percentage of active acceptance of dominant culture was similar in three racial groups. But the rate of passive acceptance of dominant culture was very diverse: 31.6% in Chinese, 7.1% in Japanese, and none for Korean. The study also demonstrates that Japanese are rather passive in preserving their own culture while Chinese and Korean were more active. 42.1% of Chinese and 50% of Korean characters were described as active in keeping their own culture. Only 7.1% of Japanese characters were characterized as active. At least, Chinese were most active to keep their own culture among the three racial groups, and Japanese were more active in accepting dominant culture than the others. In conclusion, East Asian Americans were described as more active in accepting dominant culture than keeping their own culture. Less than half (45.9%) of East Asian American was active in accepting the dominant culture, while 29.7% were active in keeping their own culture.

### 3. 2. Character's family life

The findings in character's family life

<Table 2-1>

Family Life			Chinese American	Japanese American	Korean American	Row Total
Family Background	Parental Presence	Parents	15(78.9)	12(85.7)	3(75.0)	30(81.1)
		Single Parent	2(10.5)	2(14.3)		4(10.8)
		Uncertain	2(10.5)		1(25.0)	3(8.1)
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)
	Brothers & Sisters	None	11(57.9)	5(35.7)	2(50.0)	18(48.6)
		1 or 2	4(21.1)	9(64.3)	1(25.0)	14(37.8)
		More than 2	2(10.5)			2(5.4)
		Uncertain	2(10.5)		1(25.0)	3(8.1)
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)
	Dwelling	Big City	10(52.6)	7(50.0)		17(45.9)
		Suburb	1(5.3)	5(35.7)		6(16.2)
		Rural Area	6(31.6)	1(7.1)		7(18.9)
Uncertain		2(10.5)	1(7.1)	4(100.0)	7(18.9)	
Column Total		19	14	4	37(100.0)	

parenthesis's number means percentage.

were summarized in <Table 2-1>, <2-2>, and <2-3>.

**Family background**

Parents in East Asian American have an important part to play. As seen in <Table 2-1>, thirty children had parents, which constituted 81.1% of the whole population. Only 10.8% of the characters had single parents.

However most of the characters have neither brothers nor sisters. Half of them (48.6%) were the single child of the family. By race, 9 Japanese (64.3%) had one or two brothers and sisters. Only 2 Chinese children (10.5%) had more than 2 brothers and sisters.

Half of the characters lived in the big

cities. Japanese usually lived in the big city or suburb. The accommodation of Korean American was seldom mentioned.

**Status position**

<Table 2-2> show the parents' occupations of each racial group. Chinese American fathers worked in different jobs with no general patterns, while Japanese American fathers were often grocery or repair shop owners. Besides being housewives, Chinese American mothers also worked as professional and non-professional staff. The occupations of 12 Japanese American mothers were varied: one medical doctor, four housewives, four in grocery, and

three in laundry. In one book, there is an adopted Korean. The parents were professors, but they were Western Americans. Grocery owner was the

<Table 2-2>

Family Life			Chinese American	Japanese American	Korean American	Row Total	
Status Position	Father's Occupation	No Father		1(7.1)		1(2.7)	
		Artist	2(10.5)			2(5.4)	
		Sweeper	1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
		Teacher	1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
		Farmer		1(7.1)		1(2.7)	
		Architect	1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
		Grocery	1(5.3)	4(28.6)		5(13.5)	
		Scientist	1(5.3)		1(25.0)	2(5.4)	
		Restaurant	2(10.5)			2(5.4)	
		Repair Shop		3(21.4)		3(8.1)	
		Dry Cleaner	2(10.5)			2(5.4)	
		Unemployed	1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
		Worker	2(10.5)			2(5.4)	
		Businessman	1(5.3)	2(14.3)		3(8.1)	
		Not Stated	4(21.1)	3(21.4)	3(75.0)	10(27.0)	
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
		Mother's Occupation	No Mother	1(5.3)	1(7.1)		2(5.4)
			House Wife	6(31.6)	4(28.6)		10(27.0)
			Artist	1(5.3)			1(2.7)
	Sweeper		1(5.3)			1(2.7)	
Medicine Man			1(7.1)		1(2.7)		
Farmer	1(5.3)				1(2.7)		
Grocery	1(5.3)		4(28.6)		5(13.5)		
Scientist				1(25.0)	1(2.7)		
Restaurant	1(5.3)				1(2.7)		
Dry Cleaner			3(21.4)		3(8.1)		
Lawyer	1(5.3)				1(2.7)		
Businessman	2(10.5)				2(5.4)		
Not Stated	4(21.1)		1(7.1)	3(75.0)	8(21.6)		
Column Total	19		14	4	37(100.0)		
Economic Status	Poor		6(31.6)	1(7.1)		7(18.9)	
	Adequate		5(26.3)	5(35.7)	1(25.0)	11(29.7)	
	Comfortable		5(26.3)	6(42.9)		11(29.7)	
	Wealthy		1(5.3)		2(50.0)	3(8.1)	
	Not Stated		2(10.5)	2(14.3)	1(25.0)	5(13.5)	
	Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)		
Social Status	Lower - Class	11(57.9)	4(28.6)	1(25.0)	16(43.2)		
	Middle - Class	5(26.3)	8(57.1)		13(35.1)		
	Upper - Class	1(5.3)		1(25.0)	2(5.4)		
	Not Stated	2(10.5)	2(14.3)	2(50.0)	6(16.2)		
	Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)		

parenthesis's number means percentage.

most popular job for the parents. Very few worked as professionals.

〈Table 2-2〉 illustrates the economic status of the characters. By race, the percentage of poor Chinese (31.6%) was higher than the others. About 80% of Japanese were described with their economic status as adequate or comfortable. One Korean family was illustrated as adequate, and two (including an adopted Korean family) wealthy. On the whole, 60% of East Asian American families had an average economic status.

Social status refers to the family's educational level and their economic status. The social status of East

Asian American families was evenly divided between lower and middle classes. Eleven (57.9%) Chinese were categorized as lower class, and 8 (57.1%) Japanese in middle class. Only one Chinese American and one adopted Korean family belonged to the upper class (See Table 2-2).

**Family values**

〈Table 2-3〉 illustrates parents' attitude about education and goals. Of the 37 samples, only 17 parents (45.9%) placed high values on education. This is different from a racial stereotype recent study on the new racial stereotype on East Asian.

<sup>10)</sup>But all of the Korean parents' were

〈Table 2-3〉

Family Life			Chinese American	Japanese American	Korean American	Row Total
Family Values	Parent's Attitude about Education	Low	2(10.5)			2(5.4)
		Middle	7(36.8)	4(28.6)		11(29.7)
		High	6(31.6)	7(50.0)	4(100.0)	17(45.9)
		Uncertain	4(21.1)	3(21.4)		7(18.9)
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)
	Goals	Social-- Advancement	1(5.3)	3(21.4)	1(25.0)	5(13.5)
		Economic-- Advancement	7(36.8)	1(7.1)	1(25.0)	9(24.3)
		self-- Consciousness	9(47.4)	1(7.1)		10(27.0)
		Security		8(57.1)		8(21.6)
		Uncertain	2(10.5)	1(7.1)	2(50.0)	5(13.5)
	Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	

10) Frank H. Shib. (1988). Asian-American students: The myth of a model minority. Journal of College Science Teaching, 17(5), 356-359

〈Table 3〉

Influential Character			Chinese American	Japanese American	Korean American	Row Total
Physical Traits	Age	Children	6(31.6)	3(21.4)	3(75.0)	12(32.4)
		Teenager	2(10.5)	2(14.3)		4(10.8)
		Adult	8(42.1)	7(50.0)	1(25.0)	16(43.2)
		Senior	3(15.8)	2(14.3)		5(13.5)
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)
	Sex	Male	11(57.9)	4(28.6)	2(50.0)	17(45.9)
	Female	8(42.1)	10(71.4)	2(50.0)	20(54.1)	
	Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)	
Status Position	Relation	Friend	8(42.1)	5(35.7)	3(75.0)	16(43.2)
		Parent	3(15.8)	2(14.3)	1(25.0)	6(16.2)
		G. Parent	2(10.5)	1(7.1)		3(8.1)
		Brother or Sister	2(10.5)	1(7.1)		3(8.1)
		Relatives	2(10.5)	1(7.1)		3(8.1)
		Family's Friend or Neighbor	1(5.3)	4(28.6)		5(13.5)
		Teacher	1(5.3)			1(2.7)
		Column Total	19	14	4	37(100.0)

parenthesis's number means percentage

very concerned with their children's education, while Chinese parents were not.

The parents' attention to children's education might affect the family's goal, because Chinese did not emphasize social advancement as a goal in life compared with the others. The most frequently chosen goal of the Chinese was self-consciousness (47.4 %).

The major goal for Japanese was security, which found no similar case in the other racial groups. The reason might be that the 6 characters appearing in the sample were living during World War II. In conclusion, the goals of East Asian American, as

shown in the table, was first, self-consciousness, second, economic advancement.

### 3. 3 Influential character

The analysis of physical traits and status position are summarized in 〈Table 3〉.

#### Physical traits

Though the major characters were all children and teenagers in the sample, East Asian American as influential characters were not children and teenagers. The percentage of children and teenagers as influential character

was limited to 43.2%, while the percentage of adult and senior was 56.7%. It was only Korean who placed more emphasis on peer groups as the influential factor. The result reflects that children are taught to respect their elders in East Asian society.

The number of female character as influential character for East Asian American was 20 (54.1%). As seen in <Table 3>, 71.4% of the influential character for Japanese were female, while 57.9% of Chinese were male.

#### **Status position**

The number of friend as influential character for East Asian American was 16 (43.2%), and the percentage was higher than the others in <Table 3>. But the group of adult or senior as influential character was diverse like parent, grand parent, relative, family's friend, or teacher, and the percentage for them was 48.6%. Japanese influential character placed great emphasis on family's friend or neighbor, while Chinese and Korean were not.

## **4. Conclusions**

This study traced the general

characteristics of East Asian American characters in English language children's fiction and the differences among three ethnic groups: Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans.

Main findings and conclusions made in this study are summarized as follows:

(1) East Asian American characters were largely children and female. This is especially the case for Japanese American.

(2) Most of East Asian American characters were described as primary student, and their roles in the story were major. Half of them had no language problems in English.

(3) The characteristics of energetic, and positive were the most popular traits for East Asian American, in all the three racial groups. Many Japanese were described as affable. Two negative personality traits were found in Chinese American characters.

(4) East Asian Americans were more active in accepting the dominant culture than preserving their own culture. Chinese Americans were most active to keep their own culture among the three racial groups, while Japanese were more

active in accepting the dominant culture.

(5) Most of East Asian American children were from a small family with few brothers and sisters. Half of the families lived in big cities, while Chinese American families were more often in rural area.

(6) The occupation for most East Asian American parents was grocery owner, and few were in professional fields. Usually their economic status was at the adequate or comfortable level, but not wealthy. Socio-economically, they belonged to either lower or middle class. Chinese American families were more often portrayed as

poor and of the lower class, while Japanese American families had a higher status.

(7) The parents of East Asian American were not shown to place high value on education. Their goals in life were mostly self-consciousness, and economic advancement. Korean American parents were very concerned with their children's education, while Chinese parents not.

(8) East Asian American adult or senior extended a strong influence on children than their peer group. The influential character for Japanese was family's friend or neighbor who was mostly female.

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## APPENDIX

## Children's Books about Chinese American

Title	Author	Publisher Publication	Date of	Time of Setting	Reading level
Child of the Owl	Laurence Yep	Harper & Row	1977	before 1965	Gr. 7 up
Dragon's Gate	"	Harper Collins	1993	1867	"
Dragon's Wings	"	Harper & Row	1975	1903	"
Elaine, Mary Lewis, and the	Heidi Chang	Crown	1988	x	Gr. 4
Emma's Dragon Hunt	Catherine Stock	Lothrop, Lee & Shepard	1984	x	
The Golem & the Dragon Girl	Sonia Levitin	Dial Books	1993	x	Gr. 3-7
The Happy Funeral	Eve Bunting	Harper & Row	1982	x	Gr. 3
I Hate English	Ellen Levine	Scholastic	1989	x	K3
In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson	Bette Bao Lord	Harer & Row	1984	1947	
It's Crazy to Stay Chinese in Minnesota	Eleanor Wong Telemaque	Thomas Nelson	1978	1950	Gr. 7 up
The Latch key Kids	Susan Terris	Farrar, Straus & Giroux	1986	x	
Leave that Cricket be, Alan Lee	Barbara Ann Porte	Green Willow Books	1993	x	PS up
Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New year	Kate Waters & M. Slovenz-Low	Scholastic	1990	x	K3
The Lost Umbrella of Kim Chu	Eleanor Estes	A Margaret K. McElderry	1978	x	
Moy Moy	Leo Politi	Charles Scribner's	1960	x	PS-3
Pie - Biter	Ruthanne Lum McCunn	Design Enterprises of San Francisco	1983	1860	K3
The Star Fisher	Laurence Yep	Morrow Junior Books	1991	1927	Gr. 5 up
Tales from Gold Mountain	Paul Yee	Macmillan	1989	x	PS up
Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear	Lensey Namioka	Little Brown	1992	x	Gr. 3-7

Children's Books about Japanese American

Title	Author	Publisher	Date of Publication	Time of Setting	Reading level
Aloha Means come Back	Thomas & Dorothy Hoobler	Silver Burdett	1991	1940	Gr. 4-6
The Best Bad Thing	Yoshiko Uchida	A Margaret K. McElderry Book	1983	1935	Gr. 4-7
The Birthday Visitor	"	Charle Scribner's sons	1975	1920-30 ?	Gr. 1-3
The Bracelet	"	Philomel Book	1976	1940	
The Happiest Ending	"	A Margaret K. McElderry Book	1985	1936	
A Jar of Dreams	"	"	1981	1935	Gr. 5-7
Journey Home	"	"	1978	1944	Gr. 5-7
Journey to Topaz	"	Charle Scribner's sons	1971	1941	
The Moon Bridge	Marcia Savin	Scholastic	1992	1941	
The Rooster Who Understood Japanese	Yoshiko Uchida	Charle Scribner's sons	1976	x	Gr. 1-3
Sachiko Means Happiness	Kimiko Sakai	Children's Book	1990	x	K2
Samurai of Gold Hill	Yoshiko Uchida	Charle Scribner's sons	1972	1869	
A Time Too Swift	Margaret poynter	Atheneum	1990	1941	Gr. 5 up
Umbrella	Taro Yashima	The Viking	1958	x	PS 1

Children's Books about Korean American

Title	Author	Publisher	Date of Publication	Time of Setting	Reading level
Aekyung's Dream	Min Paek	Children's Book	1978	x	K2
The Buddy Trap	Sheri Cooper Siny Kin	Atheneum	1991	x	Gr. 3-7
Song Lee in Room 2B	Suzy Kline	Viking	1993	x	K2-5
Soon-Hee in America	Schi-Zhin Rhie	Hellym	1977	x	K3